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ABSTRACT

"Integration" is a highly emotive term in New Zealand primarily because it is associated with a government policy that is clearly anything but "true" integration. The big problem seems to be the rather slipshod way the concept is employed. Sometimes one is speaking of cultural integration, again of socioeconomic integration, more likely biological or racial assimilation. These separate dimensions are, then, not considered. One process (e.g. miscegenation) does not, ipso facto, lead to another (e.g. deculturation). Without qualification, the term "integration" is meaningless in explaining anything about culture contact and the complex processes of change and adaptation. Maoris in New Zealand show some tendency toward achieving a kind of cultural integration at the national level; and New Zealand is remarkably successful in giving the Maori room for such cultural expression. However, at the micro-cultural (subcultural) level, Maoris seem to prefer a kind of democratic pluralism. Integration at this level is seen as a threat to their cultural integrity and hence, an undermining of their ethnic identification. [This document is reproduced from the best copy available; parts may not be clearly legible in both hard copy and microfiche.] (Author/JM)

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INTEGRATION, RACE, AND THE MAORI OF NEW ZEALAND

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Maoris often talk as if they would like more than anything else to achieve an "integrated" society, one in which Maori and Pakeha ("Europeans") would share a common culture. Although the focus of our research was on "acculturation and identity" among Maori university graduates, we were secondarily interested in the question of "race relations" in New Zealand generally. Using a simple sentence-completion "test," a group aspirations measure,* and formal and informal interviews, we attempted to gauge the Maori graduate's reactions to such emotionally loaded concepts as "integration," "race relations," and "culture understanding." The conclusions are interesting in themselves but may have special relevance for purposes of comparison.

First of all, "integration" is a highly emotive term in New Zealand, primarily because it is associated with a government policy which is interpreted as the opposite of "true" integration. The big problem seems to be in the rather slipshod way the concept is employed. Rarely is the term ever qualified. Consequently, sometimes one is speaking of cultural integration, again of socio-economic integration, more likely biological or "racial" assimilation (Fitzgerald 1968c:11).

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* Field research for this study was carried out in New Zealand over a 2-year period, from 1967 to 1969, and assisted by a grant from the National Institutes of Health (MH 19560).

* Parts of Hadley Cantril's measure for aspirations and strivings were borrowed but considerably modified to meet the requirements of this research (1965:22-24).

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There are, then, these several separate dimensions to consider. If one accepts the distinction between culture and society, one may, in turn, assume there might be a difference between cultural integration and social integration. In New Zealand, cultural and social interaction often take place on different levels; hence, the cultural component does not always overlap with the social. More obvious is the distinction between the social and the biological dimensions of integration. When using the popular, unqualified term "assimilation," in New Zealand one is often implying miscegenation, or the interbreeding of "races." Such a process may result in cultural assimilation as well, but not inevitably. Deculturation, or the deliberate destruction of a minority tradition, is a pre-requisite for complete cultural assimilation; and deculturation does not, ipso facto, follow miscegenation.

However, because of the Government's equation of integration with cultural assimilation, the Maoris naturally suspect the latter: "integration means the big fish swallowing the little fish"; or, as another graduate phrased the fear: "integration is me, a Maori, fitting into the Pakeha way of life and not the Pakeha fitting my Maori way of life!" Obviously, then, just labelling a process of acculturation "integration" does not lessen the dread that the majority culture will absorb the minortiy one rather than metting it part way.

The idea of integration as a fusion of two elements was only vaguely comprehended. Informants sometimes referred to integration as a "blending of two cultures," but almost no explanation followed as to how this might come about. Much more popular was the stress on unity in diversity, what one might call "democratic cultural pluralism." True integration was defined as the co-operation of two "cultures" rather than an amalgamation or assimilation one of the other. This emphasis on "enlightened provincialism" (Royce 1909:233) was summed up concisely by a young female graduate: "Integration means you accept me as such and I do the same for you."

Thus, integration as total fusion was not found to be an altogether adequate solution, at least not with this sample. To quote an informant:

> Integration means one culture -- but who needs it? Pakehas would rather be Pakehas and Maoris would rather be Maori, so true integration in this sense is undesirable.

The ultimate threat of an integrated society is the loss of a viable cultural or ethnic identity. Maoris believe there is something culturally different about themselves that distinguishes them from European New Zealanders; this distinctiveness they sometimes call "Maoritanga." The common demoninator of "Maoritanga" is not always culture per se but a sense of cultural identity; in general, a sense of belonging to and sharing in an historically rooted subculture; in particular, an ascribed identity with an extended kin group, or, as is often the case, a substitute kin group. This micro-culture (subculture) is perceived as being highly supportive and deeply satisfying. Most Maoris, then, find the retention of a cultural identity incompatible with a totally integrated society and, hence, shy away from any notion of complete integration in New Zealand.

Ideally, then, integration as a process of culture change has involved at least two policy alternatives:

1) Cultural assimilation, a type of replacement adjustment, where one culture is built on the deliberate wreckage of another. With culture assimilation, the tendency is for the dominant ruling cultural group to enforce the adoption of at least certain externals of behavior (Havighurst and Neugarten 1964).

2) Cultural integration, wherein the "best" elements of a minority tradition are incorporated into the larger culture (not just arts and crafts).

Cultural integration, at least in theory, implies some relative equality between the two groups represented (Havighurst and Neugarten).

These being only ideal types, the reality no doubt lies somewhere in-between. However, the point remains: Without qualification, the term "integration" is virtually meaningless in explaining anything about culture contact situations and the complex processes of change and adaptation.

Maoris in New Zealand show some evidence toward achieving a kind of cultural integration -- at least, at the national level (New Zealand macro-culture); and New Zealand society is remarkably successful in giving the Maori room for such cultural expression (Rice 1969:946). However, at the micro-cultural level, they seem to prefer democratic pluralism, or an amicable co-existence with the dominant Europeans. Integration at this level, they fear, could destroy their cultural integrity and, hence, the basis of their ethnic identity.

Therefore, despite a fair amount of "racial" goodwill in New Zealand, there is still some evidence of intercultural conflict, due largely to discontinuities in cultural values. It boils down to the failure of the Government and educational system to grapple adequately with a bicultural reality. As a Maori social worker stated the issue: "Cultural understanding is biased in New Zealand. The Pakeha, despite good intentions, foists his own attitudes upon the Maori who unsuspectingly adopts them." Cultural integration, after all, is a two-way process. If the Maori subculture is to contribute anything of its own to the national New Zealand society, then Pakehas must be educated to what Maori culture really is. And, insofar as the educational system does not take full recognition of divergent cultural traditions, "education" for such minority groups can only result in cultural assimilation. Such is the fear of most Maori graduates, and it is this fear that undermines so-called "good race relations" in New Zealand.

The concept of "race" (narrowly defined as "genetic identity," i.e., in terms of biology) is almost totally alien to modern New Zealand society. In fact, the egalitarian emphasis in New Zealand makes even a residual racism highly suspect. Maori graduates see the racial situation as "comparatively good" but interpret the European attitude regarding their cultural aspirations as "substantually indifferent."

The significant conclusion suggested by our projective data was the realization that there are -- at least from an analytical perspective -- three rather distinct, though overlapping, components to consider under the concept of "race": color, class, and culture. These are, of course, not static entities and, hence, vary according to circumstance and historical trends.

At present, it is our conclusion that biological factors, as a group phenomenon, figure little, if at all, in "racial consciousness" in New Zealand. It is possible, however, that social class factors will gain some ascendancy in defining major lines of cleavage in New Zealand. Although, the "revolution of rising expectations" (Van den Berghe 1967:129), so characteristic of other countries, may be to some extent mitigated by the overall equal standard of living found in New Zealand. The class factor, nonetheless, will remain significant as long as the socio-economic position of the average Maori is lower than that of the European.

The cultural component, then, figures most prominently in the sentiments expressed by Maori graduates. Here the picture is complicated by assimilative pressures. In New Zealand, there is often a confusion of race and culture -- a serious misconception considering that the Government, in a defensive position in face of world opinion, feels it will encourage a "racial" situation in recognizing any <u>cultural</u> realities. In order to avoid this perceived racial threat, it has recently passed legislations undermining Maori cultural values, and, hence, the subculture itself.

In our study, we found practically no evidence for a firm racial identity among Maori university graduates. Nevertheless, if the Government persists in its present policy of cultural assimilation, it may well precipitate the very problem it has tried to avoid. We are suggesting that a policy of "forced acculturation" may lead to an over-exaggeration of biological (racial) symbols for purposes of identification, to compensate for the loss of cultural symbols.

At any rate, it is obvious that the Government's notion of integration (Hunn 1961:15-16) and that of the Maori are quite different, and these divergent views underlie the quality of race relations in New Zealand.

In summary, Maoris often <u>say</u> they want "integration," yet they clearly do not envisage an end to the Maori micro-culture, nor to a separate cultural identity. Though change per se is not resisted, many people feel that Maoris stand to lose many valuable things under the magic word "integration."

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